safeguard the interest of natural rubber growers in the quantitative Restrictions free trade regime. Government of India have taken a number of steps to curb surge in imports of natural rubber. These measures include continuing the ban on import of natural rubber against advance licences, port restrictions on import of natural rubber and enforcing quality standard formulated by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on imported rubber also.

The above measures are expected to act as a deterrent to undue imports in the country and will enhance the consumption of indigenous rubber.

Renewal of Indo-Bangladesh Trade Pact

4974. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in an effort to renew the 1980 trade treaty, India has agreed to provide duty-free access to 40 items under 16 categories from Bangladesh;

(b) whether Bangladesh refused to budge in the matter of expediting the transit and transhipment policies to enable Indian goods to move through Bangladesh to the North East; and

(c) what other issues were discussed at the Commerce Secretary level meeting between both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) The Government of Bangladesh has been seeking duty free access on 191 tariff lines at six-digit HS level corresponding to 25 categories. During the Trade talks held at Commerce Secretary level between India and Bangladesh in Dhaka on April 8-10, 2002, the Indian side agreed to provide duty free access to 40 tariff lines at the six-digit Harmonised System (HS) level, corresponding to 16 categories of Bangladesh products. However, the actual notification of these 40 tariff lines would be done only after the Government of Bangladesh restores the land route for India's cotton yarn exports.

(b) The Indian side drew attention to the fact that in the last trade review talks held in May 2000, both sides had agreed to refer the issues of border trade, transhipment of Indian goods through Bangladesh, and deepening of tariff concessions to a joint group of experts. The Bangladesh delegation took note and suggested that the issues of border trade and transhipment be taken up at the next meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission.

(c) The full gamut of bilateral trade issues was discussed and it was agreed to continue discussions and to hold the next round of talks as early as possible.